

House New Economy Committee
Testimony – Melissa Trustman
Detroit Regional Chamber
May 17, 2007

Re: House Bills 4711-4713

Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before you today. My name is Melissa Trustman. I am a Senior Director of Government Relations with the Detroit Regional Chamber, a membership organization representing over 23,000 businesses in Southeast Michigan.

The bills before you today are an important first step to shoring up one of the most important environmental and economic development tools in Michigan. The origination of Part 201 moved contaminated properties back into a feasible market. Limiting liability where appropriate and establishing reasonable clean up plans with mitigated costs allowed previously undesirable properties the ability to provide function and revenue to local communities.

Over the last few years, additional challenges have made the program less effective than it had been when first implemented. Recognizing a need to revitalize the program, both the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the regulated community decided to investigate the root problems depleting the program's effectiveness.

Concurrently, several individual organizations have conducted their own review processes, including ours. The Detroit Regional Chamber members identified several key issues that prevented the program from its optimal operation. While we will get into those issues in greater detail as this discussion progresses, we see three dominant themes in the package before you:

1. Sets Part 201 program as a priority for the state
2. Begins to mitigate costs that have prevented full use of the program through administrative funding gaps
3. Time – decrease approval time & streamline process

Each one of these things is important to moving the program forward. While there are additional issues that will need to address the program's priority, mitigating costs and streamlining the process, these bills are the beginning of a comprehensive solution.

We would recommend some changes to the bills as written to assure that the improvements are proportional and reasonable to the sites in question. Otherwise, we encourage the committee's support of the package before you. I am happy to take any questions you may have.